

	Targed/target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn What I have done in this assignment...
Targed/Target 1	Aim to use a brief summary, as opposed to longer quotations.	Booked a study skills session with the library to go over referencing.
Targed/Target 2	Proofread with greater care to eliminate errors.	Took breaks and then came back to read what I have written with fresh eyes.
Targed/Target 3	Explain how the views you place next to each other relate.	Broke down each paragraph with highlighters, one for descriptive writing, the other analytical/critical. Highlighted what I had written and took the time to think about how to link the different views with my own.

Acknowledgement of AI tool use

I acknowledge the use of DeepSeek (<https://www.deepseek.com/>) on 24 February 2025 to support my research using the prompts:

1. What is an action point?
2. Can you help me find scientific peer reviewed literature about motivation?
3. What is the purpose and stages of school development planning?
4. Can you help me find scientific peer reviewed literature about growth mindset?
5. Can you summarise what this article means when it talks about non-cognitive features?
6. What does introductory accounting mean?
7. Can you provide me sentence starters on how I can introduce my own opinion in the third person?
8. What is top-down self assessment?
9. What is empirical evidence?

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

A Critical Evaluation of the Development of a Strategic Target in a School Development Plan: Actions, Impact, and Evidence-Based Reflections

Introduction

School development planning (SDP) is a strategic plan developed to improve a school's performance (Department for Education, 2025), a school may create a set of strategic targets to help them achieve this. This essay will look at School A, an English medium secondary local authority comprehensive school situated in the Welsh Valleys. Currently with 1036 pupils enrolled ranging from 11-18 years old and mixed gendered. Approximately a quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals (FSM), higher than the national average of 16.4% (Estyn, 2019). Due to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2024) guidelines all information regarding School A and its learners will be made anonymous for safeguarding purposes.

This essay will critically evaluate the development of the Strategic Target (ST) 'all pupils know how to act when things don't go their way and can reinvigorate their motivation to turn setbacks into success' (School A, 2022) mentioned in School A's School Development Plan. A literature review will provide a theoretical foundation for the SDP process and ST, following with the development of an action point analysing the school's approach to address the chosen ST. Reflection and evaluation are conducted regarding teaching practice to support school A's efforts through proposing evidence-based recommendations. Finally concluding on main findings, the importance of evidence-based decision making and how this will influence future teaching practice supporting professional standards.

Literature Review

School Development Planning (SDP) plays a critical role in the maintenance of improving the quality of education and the outcome for learners. Within SDP there are numerous stages including: self-evaluation, identifying priorities, setting objectives and targets, action planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and review and reflection (Welsh Government, 2022). Policies shared by the Welsh Government (2022) suggests that providing a framework aligned with the Curriculum for Wales (2022) allows for consistency across Welsh schools, ensuring alignment with national priorities within education. This finding can be attributed to broader educational reforms as it ensures local schools to report back on their progress suggesting that the Welsh Government can use this large scope of

national data to identify trends and revise policies to ensure further positive progress. Whilst a large breadth of data points gives validity to trends found, it does not account for different levels of wealth across the country meaning certain policies may favour one region whilst not being effective in another potentially exacerbating inequalities.

An additional uncontrolled factor included within this guidance is the potential bias involved when relying solely on self-evaluation practices. If schools are not realistic during self-evaluation there is a risk of top-down self-assessment. Dunning et al (2003) makes the case that preconceived notions form the basis of individuals' self-evaluation on their abilities rather on their actual performance. Suggesting that any evaluations made could be positively inflated providing an inaccurate set of results when analysing progress, affecting the validity of data received by the Welsh Government and therefore any policies created as a result may not accurately reflect true progress.

As half of the learners at School A live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales (Estyn, 2019), it could be argued that factors outside of education hold far more significance when trying to maintain motivation to succeed when they face a setback whilst in school. A proposed external factor could be that parents hold negative attitudes towards education which could significantly impact the motivation of their children. Parents may hold these negative attitudes due to barriers such as deficit thinking, financial constraints and digital deprivation (Bond et al, 2024). While Bond et al (2024) focuses primarily on parental engagement and involvement across schools in areas of socioeconomic deprivation across Wales, it doesn't explicitly investigate motivation as a factor. Research to date has not yet determined the link between parental motivation in relation to attitudes about succeeding in school and how this directly affects their children. It may be suggested that parents are modelling attitudes and behaviour to their children but there is no research to show if this is being done directly, indirectly or even to them at all. We would need a comparative analysis on the relationship between parents and children within different catchment areas to measure if deprivation has a significant effect on the levels of motivation to succeed in school when passed through generations of a family.

This belief may tie into the concept of negative perceptions of the area deprivation School A is located in. It could be suggested that stakeholders' attitudes towards motivating learners in School A may be clouded by a negative self-fulfilling prophecy. Willis (1978) found that white working-class boys had actively rejected authority and academic achievement due to participating in their own class reproduction. It is proposed that learners do not believe that they can achieve outside what is expected of their class, their resistance to education was a method of rebellion and a tool for maintaining the status quo. Applying these findings to

School A's learners it could indicate that class reproduction could be a significant factor in trying to reinvigorate motivation if a learner faces a setback as they could possibly hold the mindset of believing that there is no point in trying if their peers are mostly engaging with this mindset.

However, McGrew (2011) identifies this as a theory of relative autonomy, whereby it is the culture of the students not the individual student themselves engaging in educational resistance. Willis' case study would hold higher reliability if he had thoroughly addressed the differences between the numerous versions of resistance theory and their links to relative autonomy, commenting critically on their origins and explicitly addressing which theory he was linking to each of his specific findings. Although useful theories we cannot rely on them as they majorly lack intersectionality, we could apply Willis' resistance theory to the white working-class population of male learners at School A however the results would only show a small sample size and not be an accurate reflection of the entire school population. It could only help School A develop SDP for reinvigorating motivation when faced with a setback for white working-class boys at the school.

The mindset of the learner is possibly one of the most significant factors in School A's ST. Both Willis' (1977) and McGrew's (2011) research reflect that a fixed mindset is present within their learners suggesting that they have little to no aspirations within education which could affect their motivation. Dweck (2006) found clear differences between motivation and setbacks through her research of the Growth Mindset Theory which identifies academic achievement, resilience and motivation to be greater when students take on the belief that their abilities can be improved through learning experiences and effort that challenge them to potentially face setbacks. Likewise, Dweck and Yeager (2019) holds the view that it is important to teach students to accept setbacks as opportunities for growth instead of fixed indicators of failure.

The theories outlined by Dweck (2006) and Dweck and Yeager (2019) are incompatible with learners with a negative self-fulfilling prophecy and fixed mindset which could be a consequence of living in regions of deprivation. It doesn't account for setbacks learners may face outside of an educational environment along with their individual self-esteem. Research has not been conducted in mind of students attending compulsory education aged 3-16 who study a variety of subjects at different ability levels. This is supported by Beaston et al (2019) who address Dweck's (2006) theory is limited in context due to the type of research carried out, they comment that Dweck (2006) only focuses on introductory level accounting explaining that the findings can only be applied to this specific educational context. Due to Beaston et al (2019) commenting that introductory is the easiest level of learning it may give

learners the belief that they are naturally good at that class without realising that they don't have to understand more complex material which may require deeper critical thinking and effort. Additionally due to the age of the participants being first year university students we cannot assume that children will behave in the same way.

Developing an Action Point

School A is a pioneer school working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward development related to the curriculum and professional learning (Estyn, 2019). The school aims to create a disciplined learning environment where learners are expected to contribute to school life through hard work, this aim holds significance to the school especially as their ST relates directly to the school's motto 'Motivated to Strive' (School A, 2025). This ST has been prioritised due to inspection feedback, it has been stated that School A needs to improve on wellbeing and attitudes to learning as it was classified as inadequate (Estyn, 2019).

From firsthand experience at School A there have been a few implementations put in place to address the ST. Firstly providing extrinsic rewards in the form of stickers when learners participate, this was implemented during selected lessons to engage learners and reinforce positive behaviour to either keep learners motivated or to get them to become motivated during school. Additionally maintaining and encouraging teachers and learners to uphold a growth mindset when they face a setback. Challenging learners on their use of language when they claim that they cannot achieve and explore why they hold this view with the objective of reframing their thought to break down the self-fulfilling prophecy they are holding on to. Achieving this requires building a rapport with individuals and knowing how far you can push them academically but also personally.

Earning the trust of the learners at School A is an extremely crucial element in implementing these methods. Ensuring that when faced with learners opening up about their personal lives that it is done in a safe way, ensuring consent and assent is maintained throughout the conversation and that it is done in the presence of another staff member. Any concerns would be passed on to the safeguarding team at the school and the learner would be notified if what they said would need to be passed on.

These methods had to be optimized during the three months of placement, time needed to pass to allow rapport to build. By the second month nearly all learners taught showed a more positive mindset whilst in class. It was not until the last month that extrinsic rewards were introduced as it was important that the learners were already actively engaging during lessons, to ensure that the rapport building was not built on the assumption that learners

could just earn rewards for the sake of earning them. It was to ensure that learners would actively want to succeed during the lesson and that the rewards were treated as an added extra bonus.

School A evaluates the success of the ST through a merit scheme, this is recorded on a register software called School Information Management System (SIMS). The points can be both positive 'P' or negative 'B'. There are different levels of negative B points ranging from B1 to B4, with B4 being the most extreme leading to headteacher involvement. School A's approach allows for an efficient way of tracking learners' progress, all teachers within the school have access to SIMS and can look up individual learners quickly, saving time when needing to find this information. By using SIMS it allows for behavioural data to be monitored using quantifiable metrics and by pairing this with written reports this qualitative evidence can be used to build a case study. Teachers can then view these and see if learners are succeeding and see if their SDP is working.

It can be argued that merit schemes such as School A's promote learners to treat school like a game. School A at the end of every term provides a raffle where every learner who achieves a certain number of behavioural points are in the running to win a prize. This extrinsic reward may provide a source of motivation for the learners to do better although it can encourage a minority to only behave well just to win a prize and not genuinely build skills.

There is also the risk of bias in merit point systems like this, teachers can be biased towards individuals and may discourage other learners to try. The system itself could also be argued to be not accessible for all types of learners. Those from other cultural backgrounds, those with additional needs or learners who are absent from school due to circumstances out of their control may not have the same opportunities as their peers to earn positive behaviour points potentially affecting their motivation to succeed when faced with a setback.

Reflection and Evaluation

Reflecting on the practices above to support School A's efforts it can be said that incorporating extrinsic rewards support Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci et al, 2001). Deci et al (2001) state that extrinsic rewards either undermine or enhance intrinsic motivation depending on how the recipient perceives it, this could either be seen as informational or controlling. This could suggest that School A could change their method of rewarding motivation, instead of presenting tangible rewards such as vouchers it would be more meaningful to offer a symbolic reward such as a certificate. This could be applied to presenting learners with stickers and instead providing public positive verbal praise. This has

not been researched thoroughly enough in an educational environment presenting a gap in the literature whereby there is not an understanding of how extrinsic rewards affect motivation in a variety of contexts.

Another recommendation for School A would be to limit rewards given out to learners, by holding a raffle every term it can lead to the intrinsic motivation of learners to be lost. The value of learning should be emphasised not the value of earning behavioural points. Cameron and Pierce (1994) state that for simple tasks that rewards may be effective, however for complex tasks the intrinsic motivation of the individual may be lost. Suggesting that in the long term it may be harder for School A to maintain motivation levels among learners from when they first begin secondary school to when they are working towards qualifications such as their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSEs). If rewards are overused, it could hinder long term motivation of learners due to there being a possibility of the rewards losing their positive effect as the novelty wears off over time. Henderlong and Lepper (2002) suggest combatting this by delivering rewards more sparingly and at random so learners do not have any expectations that their efforts will always be rewarded. If School A were to take this advice it could be suggested that learners will understand that the value of earning is more rewarding when it is not an expectation but a result of hard work driven by motivation.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the ST from School A's SDP has been beneficial in understanding the theory behind motivation and different factors that may act as barriers towards learners succeeding. The main finding that holds key significance to this being that parents and guardians' own attitudes towards motivation could potentially be modelled towards their children however there is no research to show if this is being done and if it is what effect it has on their children. This can potentially be used to measure if attitudes to motivation and deprivation are linked. It is crucial that evidence-based decision making is done when creating an SDP as research is a tool for implementing methods to encourage improvement no matter what the ST is. Without this schools run the risk of not having a clear plan with goals that can help them measure if they are improving. Evidence-based research ensures that schools are also ethical in their decision making and avoid wasting time implementing strategies that have no evidence to show they are credible. This experience will influence future decision making when in the classroom by actively ensuring that engagement with all learners is occurring and getting to know what barriers could be holding them back from succeeding. Active research into strategies to help learners depending on their barriers will be carried out, ensuring that a blanket approach will not be applied but that an individualistic approach will

be implemented. This will be supporting the Professional Standards of collaboration, Professional Learning and Equity and Inclusion.

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